

## The Cruel Mistress

When as a youth at Caissa's shrine I knelt  
And marvelled at her magic, chequered maze,  
At times, in deep euphoria I felt  
That I could weave her weft for all my days.

But grim reality was ever near,  
And though in turn I took my humble prize  
The more I loved her, so too did I fear  
That I, in truth, was nothing in here eyes.

And so it happened that I left her path  
To wend my way far off the beaten track,  
To seek my fortune and escape the wrath  
Of marble queens and vengeful knights in black.

The Dragon's fiery breath eluded me,  
And quaint, romantic gambits played by kings  
Were left to rust, the Frenchman's legacy  
And Greek gifts were left standing in the wings.

And yet, through all my travels down the years,  
I never strayed so far as to forget  
The pleasure in the pain, the smiles through tears,  
And sometimes, even now, I still regret

The fact that I deserted her to chase  
Another rainbow's end where Fortune lies,  
And where (as once with Caissa) I must face  
The Cruellest Mistress in a sylph's disguise.

Alexander Baron